MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: I oppose the Bill and associate myself with the opinion of my honourable friend Mr. C. S. Lakshmana Aiyar. The registration of documents is primarily resorted to when land or property has to be sold. The registered document vests the right to the purchaser. Supposing there is a Hindi knowing Sub Registrar. A man thinks of registering his document in Hindi. He gets his document registered and leaves it. After 20 years that property has to be bought by somebody else who does not know Hindi.

PRESIDENT: I can shorten discussion in this matter. I see what is exactly passing through the minds of the honourable members. The present difficulty has arisen in the case of certain elaborate English documents for which some times Malayalam translations may or may not give full purport. The object of Government is only to see that Malayalam, Tamil or English translations should be registered. If this is the sense of this House, I think the House may consent to the Bill being adjourned and proper limitations brought forward.

Mr. P. S. Nataraja Pillai and Mr. C. S. Lakshmana Aiyar accepted this decision. The House gave its assent to the proposal.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: Under Section 64 (1).....

PRESIDENT: You may take time to consider this. The matter will be considered by the Law Officers of Government and if they think that the whole object can be achieved by the rules, it will be alright. Otherwise they will bring forward the amendment.

The proposal was put to the House and carried.

THE TRAVANCORE DEBT RELIEF ACT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

MR. N. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI: I beg to introduce the Travancore Debt Relief Act (Amendment) Bill and move that the Bill be read in the Assembly.

MR. S. NARAYANA AIYAR: I second it.

PRESIDENT: I understand, Mr. Legal Remembrancer, that there are certain objections raised and that these objections have not been considered by Government. If the Legal Remembrancer has no objection, I think he may bring this Bill at the next meeting.

The proposal was put to the House and carried.

MOTION *RE*: BUNCHY TOP DISEASE OF BANANAS IN THE STATE.

MR. K. R. NARAYANA AIYAR: I beg to move the following motion. "That the situation in regard to the Bunchy Top disease of the Bananas in the State and the necessary measures to be taken to prevent it be considered."

Sir, it was in the year 1943 that a disease known as 'Bunchy Top" was noticed among plantains in the Kottayam taluk. Unfortunately, I should say, most unfortunately, the disease had been imported into

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the State for the first time by importing infected suckers from Ceylon. The symptoms of the disease are very marked. In the affected plants, the growth is arrested and the leaves become stunted and shrivelled up. Leaf blades grow progressively shorter and often fail to unroll themselves. Successive leaves get clustered, stand erect and look like a bunch. Hence the name Bunchy Top. In shoots which get the infection fairly early no flower is developed. If the flower stalk is already formed before the infection develops it is often aborted. When any one plant in the shoot is affected it results in the complete destruction of the plants in that clump. Plantains at different stages of growth, young ones and old and all varieties ഏത്തൻ, കദളി, പൂവൻ കപ്പ etc., are equally susceptible to the disease. The disease has somewhat developed into a serious stage.

I shall now proceed to inform the House as to how the disease is caused. It is caused by a virus, an ultra-microscopic principle which is believed to be a living germ as it reproduces itself and multiplies rapidly on the root plant. This virus is transmitted from infected to healthy plants by a small insect called the Banana Aphis, which sucks the juice and the virus from the affected plant. It then feeds on the healthy plants and thus carries the infection in very much the same way as a mosquito transfers the malarial parasite from an infected person to another healthy person.

In 1943 the affected region extended only up to an area of 10 to 15 square miles. The disease was investigated by the Agricultural officers and the Mycologist of the University and was brought to the notice of the Department. In Karkadagom 1118 two Field Assistants were appointed by the Agricultural Department to survey the disease. They completed their survey by Vrichigom 1119 and two more persons were appointed. This disease was also declared a disease under the Plant Pests and Diseases Act.

Indiscriminate planting was going on at the same time. The officers warned the cultivators that unless the affected plants were destroyed the disease would spread. By the beginning 1120 the situation had developed much more seriously. My friend, Dr. Karunakaran visited the area;—he was officiating as Director of Research then—inspected the plants in the villages along with the officers of the Agricultural Department and studied the situation very carefully. He submitted that the manner in which the disease was tackled was not adequate enough and that the whole scheme should be re-organised that if that failed total destruction will become inevitable. The subordinate officers were increased in strength and instead of 10 or 12 people, 40 were appointed. The Agricultural Inspector, Kottayam was appointed Special Officer for the control of the disease. Four demonstrators were also appointed to supervise the work of the fieldmen. They took very vigilant measures, went round, inspected the gardens and destroyed all affected plantains. During the past six months, these officers visited not less than 18,000 gardens and destroyed about 3 lakhs of plantains.

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In spite of all these measures it has not been possible to bring the disease under control, the main reason being that the incubation period of the disease varies from three weeks to ten weeks and what appeared to be a healthy plantain at a particular time of visit would show symptoms of the disease in a period of another month or so. Therefore when these officers visit one garden the plants may look perfectly healthy, but by the time they complete one round and come back they will find them all afflicted. The disease has now spread over a fairly wide area, roughly about 220 square miles with Kottayam as the centre. The boundaries are Manimala-Vazhoor in the East, Kumarakom in the West, Ettumanoor in the North and Changanacherry in the South.

It is hardly necessary to tell the honourable members of this House the importance of the banana industry to us. Every part of the tree is utilised, leaves, the inner core of the stem and fruits. In fact, it is very vitally interlinked with the life of our people. Banana is the only fruit available in the State throughout the whole year and for all classes of people alike. On a rough computation, I have calculated that the money value of our banana industry would come to three crores of Rs. in every year.

This is not a new disease. It occurs for the first time in this State now, but elsewhere, it was noticed as early as 50 years ago. It appears to have come under observation in Figi about the year 1891. In Ceylon it was detected in 1913, where it raged widely. In New South Wales and Queensland, in the Philippines, and in Egypt, this disease is prevalent.

I shall indicate the measures that were adopted by the Australian Government to bring the disease under control. They were:—

(1) Prohibition of the transportation of any vegetative parts of any banana plant from any part of the areas affected with Bunchy Top.

(2) Prohibition of any further planting up within the areas.

(3) Prohibition of trade in suckers.

(4) The registration of all plantations in which cultivation is conducted on systematic lines.

(5) The destruction immediately of all banana plants in back yards or similar gardens.

(6) Immediate eradication and destruction of every infected stool.

(7) The systematic examination by growers of all stools in plantations.

(8) Prohibition of the transportation of banana fruit from any affected area.

(9) Cleaning up of all deserted plantations.

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(10) Rigid enforcement of regulations rendering the owner of any area liable for harbouring affected stools after the lapse of a stated period from adoption of eradication measures.

(11) Discouragement of further planting up until such time as a clean certificate can be given for the whole of the affected area.

(12) That after a period of twelve months from the date of the adoption of the eradication measures, the matter of the complete destruction of all banana plants throughout the affected areas be considered by the body responsible for the control of the disease.

There is no cure for the disease. Investigations have been carried out by numerous scientists all the world over especially in the tracts that I have indicated and they have come to the conclusion that immediate steps should be taken to destroy all the plantains in the affected areas.

The House rose at 6 P. M.

Trivandrum,
12th June 1945.

S. VAIDYANATHA AIYAR,
Secretary to the Sri Mulam Assembly

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